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(12) **United States Plant Patent**
Schlueter

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(54) ***HIBISCUS ROSA-SINENSIS* PLANT NAMED 'MOON PIE'**

(50) Latin Name: ***Hibiscus rosa-sinensis L.***
Varietal Denomination: **Moon Pie**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./257**
(58) **Field of Search** Plt./257

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new plant variety of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* named 'Moon Pie', characterized by a large ruffled multi-colored flower with a red center, a creamy-white halo followed by yellow edges. It is a free-flowering plant with an upright, compact habit. The foliage is glossy and dark green.

4 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical classification: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L.

Varietal denomination: The new plant has the varietal denomination 'Moon Pie'.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L., which was developed in a controlled breeding program in Webster, Tex.

The genus *Hibiscus* comprises about 250 species of herbs, shrubs and trees in warm temperate and tropical regions; with leaves usually simple, mostly palmately veined, lobed or parted; flowers mostly solitary in the leaf axils but sometimes in racemes, corymbs or panicles. *Hibiscus* is included in the family Malvaceae, which comprises about 95 genera of herbs, shrubs and trees originating in tropical and temperate regions. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is a glabrate shrub, seldom over 8 feet tall in cultivation, but treelike to 15 feet or more in tropical regions. Leaves to 6-inches long, ovate, usually serrate, mostly glossy green. Flowers solitary in upper leaf axils.

The new *Hibiscus* is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the inventor in Webster, Tex. The objective of the program was to create new *Hibiscus* selections with improved bloom quality, color and floriferousness, plants that can be commercially produced on their own root systems, and improved plant habit with regard to vigor and postproduction longevity.

The new *Hibiscus* originated from a cross-pollination made by the Inventor using 'Spring Break' (not patented) as the female parent and 'Wheel of Fortune' (not patented) as the male parent. The new *Hibiscus* was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a plant within the progeny of the stated cross-pollination in a controlled breeding program in Webster, Tex.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new variety was discovered in a controlled breeding program of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and differs from its parents and other known cultivars of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* by the following characteristics in combination:

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1. Upright, compact symmetrical plant habit that is suitable for container production;
2. Healthy green foliage;
3. Vigorous growth habit;
4. Large ruffled multicolored flower with a red center, a creamy-white halo, followed by yellow edges.
5. Free-flowering.

Asexual reproduction of the new variety by stem cuttings, performed in Webster, Tex. and Fulshear, Tex. have confirmed that the distinctive characteristics of the new variety are stable and transmitted to succeeding generations, and the new variety reproduces true to type.

COMPARISON WITH PARENTS AND OTHER CULTIVARS

'Moon Pie' is distinguished from its female parent 'Spring Break' (not patented) by its flower color; 'Spring Break' has an ivory bloom with a dark red eye. 'Moon Pie' is distinguished from its male parent 'Wheel of Fortune' (not patented) by its flower color and flower color pattern; 'Wheel of Fortune' displays rings of blue and pink tones. Also, 'Wheel of Fortune' has a very flat flower with very little tufting, while 'Moon Pie' has much more character with fancy tufting.

Plants of 'Moon Pie' can be compared to plants of the cultivar 'High Voltage' (not patented). However, in side-by-side comparisons conducted in Webster, Tex., plants of the 'Moon Pie' differ from plants of the cultivar 'High Voltage' in the following characteristics:

1. Flowers of 'Moon Pie' display a different color pattern than flowers of 'High Voltage';
2. Plants of 'Moon Pie' are easier to propagate via vegetative cuttings than plants of the cultivar 'High Voltage';

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The accompanying illustrations show a specimen of the new cultivar in a photographic illustration as true to color as is reasonably possible to make in an illustration of this character.

FIG. **1** illustrates a side perspective view of a typical plant of 'Moon Pie';

FIG. **2** illustrates the scale of a typical flower of 'Moon Pie';

FIG. **3** illustrates the typical young to mature foliage of 'Moon Pie', the abaxial and adaxial surfaces are shown at each stage; and

FIG. **4** illustrates a dissected flower of 'Moon Pie', including shape and size of petals and characteristics of the reproductive structures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW VARIETY

'Moon Pie' has not been observed under all possible environmental, cultural and light conditions. The following observations and description are of plants grown in Fulshear, Tex., in January 2003, under polypropylene shadecloth providing a 30 percent light reduction, and under conditions which closely approximate commercial production. Plants described were approximately one year old and in a #3 nursery container. In this description, color references are to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart (2000) and terminology used in the color descriptions herein refers to plate numbers in this color chart. Phenotypic expression may vary with light intensity, cultural and environmental conditions.

CLASSIFICATION

Botanical: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L., 'Moon Pie'.

Parentage.—Female or Seed Parent: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Spring Break' (not patented). Male or Pollen Parent: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Wheel of Fortune' (not patented).

Propagation: By stem cuttings.

Time to initiate rooting: Approximately 14 to 21 days at 21–24° C.

Time to develop roots: Approximately 42 to 56 days at 21–24° C.

Root description: Fine to medium; fibrous; freely branching.

PLANT

Size:

Height.—Approximately 51 cm from soil level to top of flowers.

Diameter spread.—Approximately 60 cm.

Form and growth habit: Perennial, evergreen shrub; mostly upright and somewhat spreading.

Branching: Freely branching; approximately 4 to 8 lateral branches develop after pinching.

Lateral branches.—Approximately 20 cm long and 5 mm in diameter.

Internode length.—Approximately 4 cm.

Leaf:

Shape.—Ovate.

Apex.—Rounded.

Base.—Cordate.

Leaf size.—Approximately 9 cm long and 9.5 cm wide.

Arrangement.—Alternate, single; symmetrical.

Margin.—Undulate with crenulate margins.

Aspect.—Undulate.

Texture/substance.—Glabrous, shiny.

Coloration.—Young foliage: Upper side: Near Yellow-Green Group 146A. Under side: Near Yellow-Green Group 146C. Mature foliage: Upper side: Near Green Group 147A. Under side: Near Green Group 147B.

Petioles.—Size: Approximately 5 cm long, 3 mm across. Coloration: Near Yellow-Green Group 147A. Texture: Smooth.

Hardiness.—USDA Zone 10 (30° F. to 40° F.).

Pests/diseases.—Resistance to known *Hibiscus* diseases had not been observed on plants grown under conditions approximating commercial practices.

Infloresence:

Bloom period.—Typically year-round under subtropical and tropical conditions.

Flower arrangement.—Arranged singly at terminal leaf axils; free-flowering with 3 to 4 flower buds and/or open flowers per terminal apex; flowers face upright and slightly outward.

Flower appearance.—Ruffled tri-colored with a red "eye" or throat, white halo and soft yellow edges; flowers are open for about two days before closing; flowers persistent.

Flower diameter.—Approximately 16 cm.

Buds (just prior to showing color).—Rate of Opening: Approximately 1 or 2 days, depending on temperature. Shape: Elliptic. Length: Approximately 3 cm. Diameter: Approximately 1.4 cm. Color: Near Yellow-Green Group 146B.

Fragrance.—None noted.

Petals.—Number/Arrangement: Corolla consists of 5 overlapping petals. Shape: Spatulate with rounded apex. Size: Approximately 8 cm long and 9 cm wide. Margin: Entire, but ruffled. Texture: Smooth.

Color.—Upper Surface: The "eye" or throat is near Red Group 46A and transitions outward to near White Group 155D. The yellow edges start near Yellow Group 10B and darken outward to near Yellow Group 13A. Lower Surface: The majority is near Yellow Group 12B to 12D, eventually fading to near White Group 155B at the base of the petal.

Sepals.—Number/Arrangement: 5 sepals fused into a star-shaped calyx. Shape: Linear with acuminate apices. Margin: Entire. Color: Near Yellow-Green Group 146A.

Peduncles.—Length: Approximately 4 cm. Diameter: Approximately 2 mm. Angle: Upright to about 45 degrees. Strength: Strong, flexible. Color: Near Yellow-Green Group 146B.

REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

Androecium:

Stamens.—Numerous; approximately 50. Stamen Length: Approximately 5 mm. Filament Color: Near White Group 155B.

Anther length.—Approximately 1 mm.

Pollen amount.—Abundant.

Pollen color.—Yellow Group 5B.

Gynoecium:

Pistil number.—1.

Pistil length.—Approximately 6 cm.

Stigma appearance.—5, rounded.

Stigma diameter.—Approximately 2 mm.

Stigma color.—Near Orange-Red Group 34A.

Style color.—Lower half near Red Group 46A; upper half near White Group 155B.

Seed production.—Seed production has not been observed.

I claim:

1. A new variety of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* plant as shown and described.

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FIG. 1

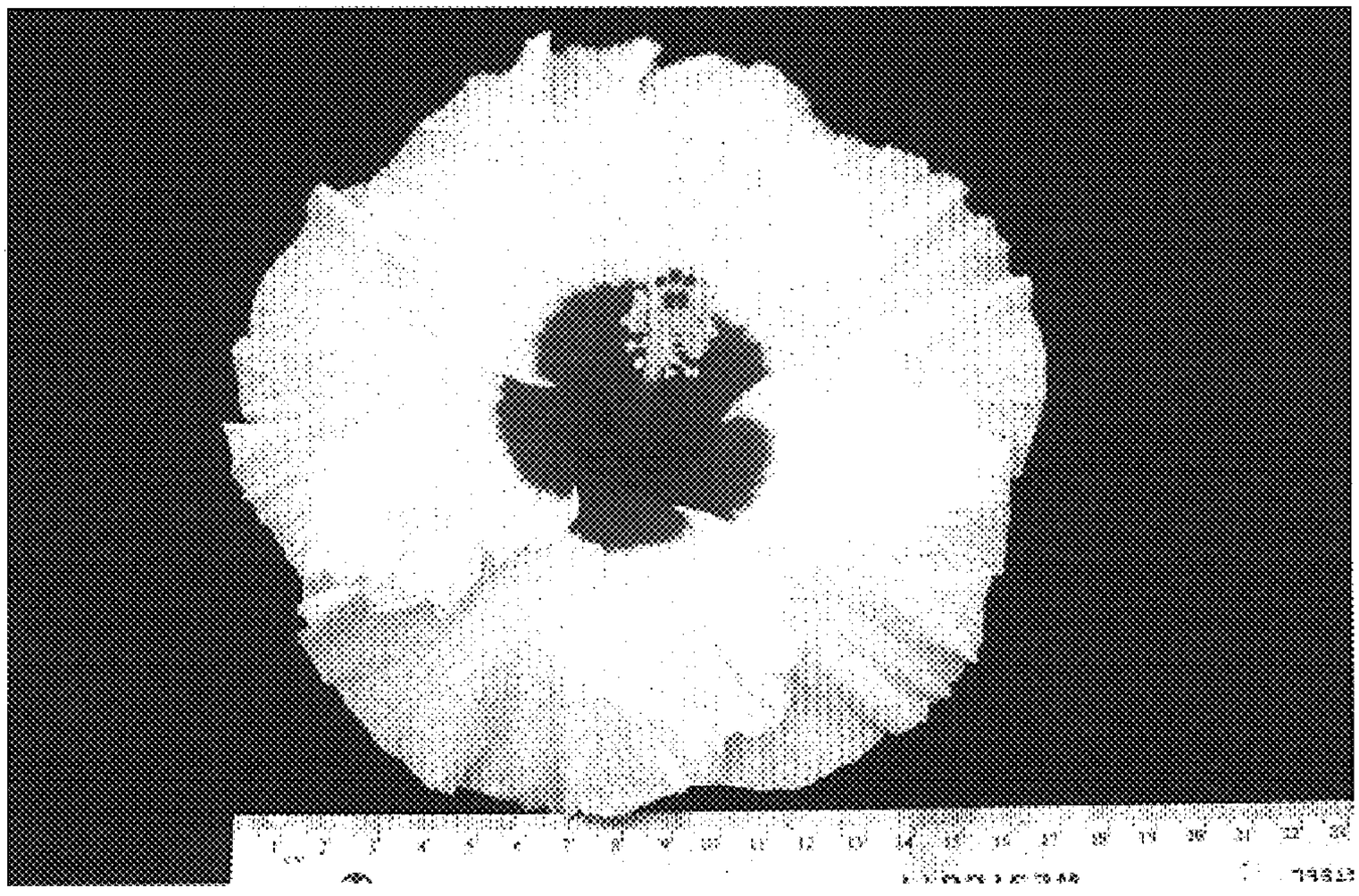

FIG. 2

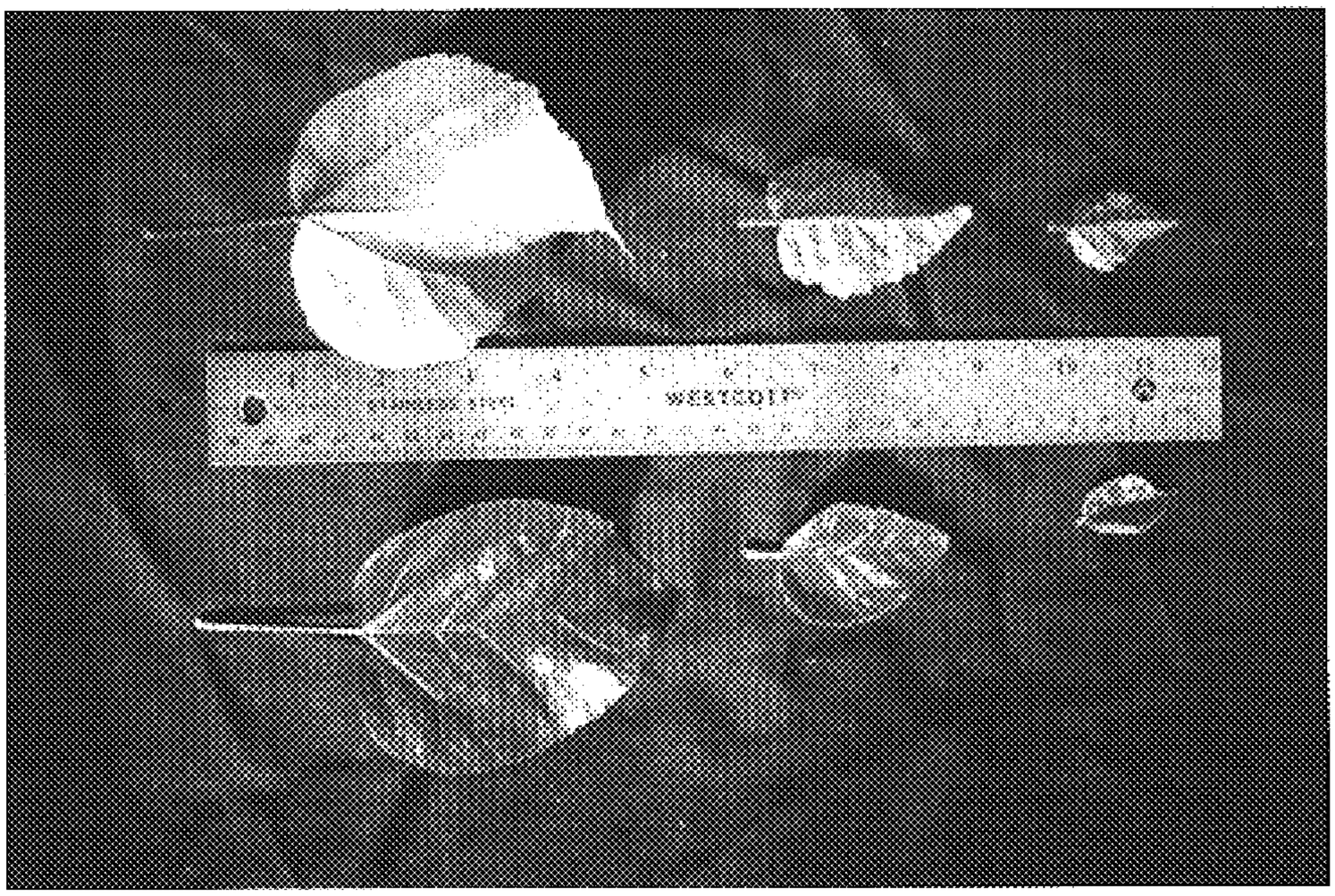

FIG. 3

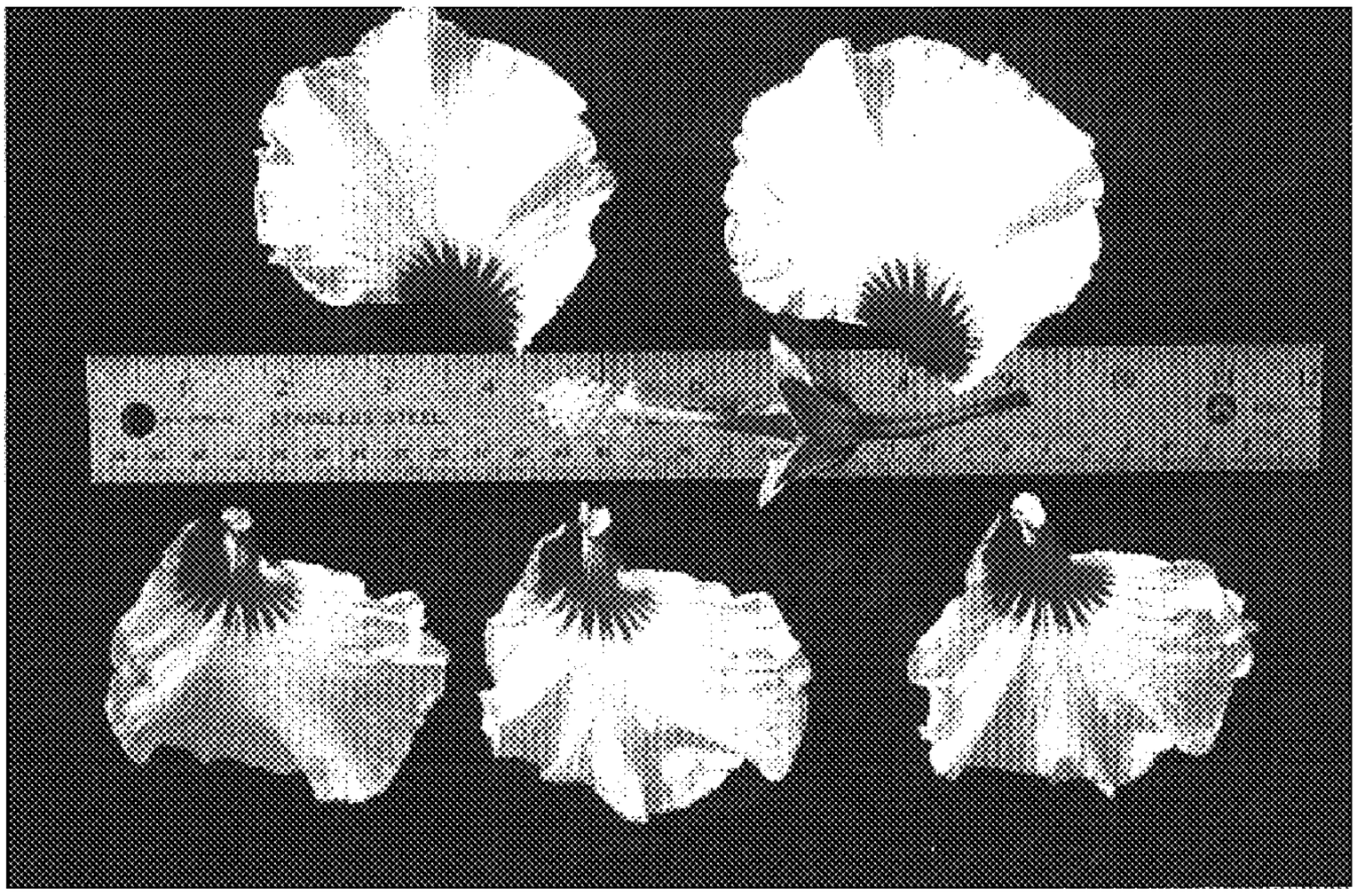

FIG. 4